

Of course Hiroshi's biggest problem was insecurity, needing to assert his adequacy. Tim couldn't see that -- too close to home. But Tim had enough sense to start planning a move. He loved Hiroshi and Akiko both. He did not want a mess. But Hiroshi got drunk at Tim's going-away party, flung Akiko at him, humiliated them both. At the station Akiko whispered she'd see Tim again. Hiroshi had disappeared. Tim couldn't sleep for two days.

Soon Akiko, who was still living with Hiroshi, visited Tim in secret. She was everything he might have dreamed. Then she was gone. They next spoke on the telephone. She had some astonishing information. It turned out that the cold fish and Hiroshi were pals, that Hiroshi had recognized who it was from the story, that he had gone to the cold fish afterward and said: "If what I've heard is true, you're a prick." The cold fish lied about it. Next he'd rushed to the town Tim had moved to, to kill him. A man of action. Tim happened not to be home that day. Now Tim had to call his ex-girlfriend and reveal what beans had been spilled. She wanted to throttle him. She was still trying to make a go of it with the fellow, and this would wreck everything. Everything!

Akiko and Tim, too, persisted. But they were in separate towns. And she got involved with another American who lived nearer. And those two were eventually married. And everybody despised Tim. That was the one point on which all parties agreed. Tim, to take the obvious example, hated himself even more, he was sure, than Hiroshi could have (which was an accomplishment). At the same time, Hiroshi hated Hiroshi even more than Tim could have -- if Tim had. You see what I mean about Tokyo?

HAIKU

The one quiet place
to make out: the graveyard. But
they believe in ghosts.

Earthquake underneath
rocking the lake like a tub
and leaving a ring.